



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

ENGINEERING ALUMNI NETWORK ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM MENTEE HANDBOOK

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MENTEE HANDBOOK

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is an intentional relationship designed to foster your growth and development.

Your alumni mentor acts as an informal tour guide for the particular field or profession that interests you. They are a role model and a resource to help you develop your own potential.

Successful mentoring is based on a reciprocal and comfortable relationship between you and your mentor. Both of you must work together to make the relationship successful. Remember to be open-minded and respectful.

What can you expect from your mentor?

A good mentor:

- » Stimulates your learning and reflection, but won't necessarily provide you with all the answers you need
- » Is available and willing to connect with you, giving appropriate guidance and feedback
- » Is open-minded, flexible, empathetic, and encouraging

A mentor is not:

- » A tutor
- » A counsellor
- » Someone you approach for a job

Your mentor's role:

- » To share knowledge about a particular profession or field
- » To act as a resource for professional contact in a particular field
- » To encourage and support your career and leadership development

The benefits of having a mentor:

- » Increased knowledge about a prospective field or profession, including its values and culture
- » Increased personal knowledge and organizational awareness
- » Access to an effective learning tool that stimulates goal-oriented planning
- » Increased networking opportunities

What are your responsibilities as a mentee?

A good mentee:

- » Is proactive in and committed to cultivating the mentoring relationship
- » Is respectful of the mentor's time (i.e., is punctual and gives advance notice of cancellations)
- » Thinks about questions and issues to discuss in advance of the meeting (i.e., has an agenda for the meeting)
- » Is willing to participate in an open and honest discussion about their background, interests, work experiences, and about their career goals
- » Follows up meetings with a thank-you email (or phone call)
- » Respects the confidentiality and privacy of the mentor

Confidentiality:

- » You and your mentor are responsible for identifying and observing areas of confidentiality
- » These areas may include personal or privileged industry information

Dress Code:

- » You should expect to dress in appropriate business attire when you meet with your mentor – especially at your first meeting
- » Take cues from your mentor on how to dress appropriately in his or her workplace

Key expectations for mentees:

- » Come to the relationship prepared: successful mentorship experiences happen when students have questions in mind or activities to suggest when meeting their mentors
- » It is important to have an idea of what you would like to learn and know as well as what kind of mentoring relationship you want. It is also important to communicate these to your mentor at the start of your relationship
- » **DO NOT** ask your mentor for a job
- » You should define the boundaries of your mentoring relationship early on: remember, your mentor is a role model and guide; not a counsellor

Set Goals

Goal-setting is an integral element in ensuring your mentoring partnership is a meaningful experience for both parties. Setting goals and working towards them over the

course of your relationship will help to maximize your learning outcomes. Use the Goal Setting worksheet to help you set learning goals.

Your goals may be to:

- » Obtain advice on specific learning or development opportunities
- » Obtain substantive knowledge related to your field
- » Obtain insights into best practices, values, and culture within your field
- » Discover your strengths and areas for development
- » Explore career choices and opportunities
- » Establish your personal or professional brand
- » Build a professional online presence
- » Refine your interpersonal skills
- » Meet other professionals in your prospective field

Being an effective communicator:

Effective and professional communication is an essential part of a successful mentoring relationship.

- » In your written communication, be professional in your spelling, composition and phrasing
- » Be assertive and honest in your communication, but be respectful
- » Respect your mentor's time and schedule – allow your mentor enough time to respond to email or voicemail before following up

Things you can discuss with your mentor:

Discuss your background to find out if it fits with your career choice, e.g., do you require further education, and, if so, what kind?

- » Ask for advice on how you can market your skills and/or experience in your field of interest, e.g., what experiences should you emphasize when applying for a job?
- » Ask about the culture and values of the prospective field. What kind of challenges has your mentor faced?
- » Ask your mentor to describe how the actual workplace experience compares to his or her expectations as a student.
- » Ask your mentor to critique your CV or resume and cover letter for positions you are applying for or general advice preparing for your career.
- » Towards the end of your mentoring relationship, ask for:
 - A tour, if possible, of your mentor's workplace
 - Referrals and any recommended readings

Suggestions for discussion with your mentor

- » How do I prepare for the transition from student life to the working world?
- » What are the important challenges in your mentor's professional life?

Here are some questions to ask your mentor. Choose a few before you meet and then let the conversation flow:

- » Tell me about your job.
- » What jobs have you had in the past?
- » What was your experience at U of T like?
- » What did you like best about U of T?

Mentorship request email template for mentees

Dear _____:

My name is _____, and [SHARE YOUR BACKGROUND, YEAR, MAJORS, CO-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT].

I came across your profile on the Engineering CONNECT Alumni Mentorship Program group and would like to request you as my mentor.

[SHARE WHAT YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE]

If you accept my request, I would be happy to set up a time for us to talk over the phone, via Skype or in person.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
